3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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a buffalo robe, a bone pipe, tobacco, and the material for producing a light. Clad only in breechclout and moccasins, he set out to find a place far enough removed that people would not disturb him, and still near enough to camp that it would not be too difficult to return when weak from hunger. He stopped four times on the way, each time smoking and praying. The spot selected was a solitary place at the top of a hill, or perhaps the site of a grave of a famous warrior or, more especially, of a medicine man who had had the kind of power the candidate desired. Medicine Bluff in the Wichita Mountains was one of the favorite locations.

The candidate preferred a position on the south slope where he could see both east and west. As darkness approached, he smoked and prayed for power, for good power, and that he might use it for good. He covered himself with the buffalo robe at night as he lay facing the east, and he had to keep his head covered the whole night through. Rising at daybreak, he faced the east to receive the benefit of the power radiating from the sun. He was required to fast during the vigil, but unlike some Plains people, inflicted no self-torture. The Comanche was confident of himself as a man: he was reverent toward the power-giving spirits, but he felt no need to debase himself before them, to lacerate and mutilate himself in sacrificial appeasement. He was quietly humble before the sources of spiritual power, but he saw no call to demean himself in lamentation and self-pity. He called not for mercy; for him there was no Siouxan self-objection as in the opening plaint of a Winnebago on the vision quest: "O, spirits, here humble in heart I stand beseeching you." For him, no Arapaho wails:

Father have pity on me,
Father have pity on me,
I am crying for thirst,
I am crying for thirst,
All is gone—I have nothing to eat,
All is gone—I have nothing to eat.

The Comanche on the vision quest might suffer the inner turmoil of anxiety and apprehension; yet he lay quietly waiting for

[2] Informants: Kills Something; Yellowfish; also, Ralph Linton, "The Comanche Sun Dance," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVII (1935), 424; Marcy, *Adventure on Red River*, 176.

6: Linton E-5 (1933)1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

796 and for the spectators to eat. This continued for three days. All the people
535 had to bathe every morning before entering the lodge.

796 The dancers underwent no torture other than exhaustion and abstain-
535 ence from food and drink. Even the abstinence was not complete. Dancers
785 were allowed to chew slippery elm bark during the rest periods, also to drink the mucilaginous fluid obtained by scraping the inside of strips of this bark. They were allowed to eat the dried wild plums which would be found lying on the ground under plum bushes at this season of the year and possibly other dried fruits as well.

796 The condition of the dancers was closely watched and if it seemed that
535 any dancer would be unable to last out the full period his father would
783 arrange for his release. The father went to the medicine man and without making him the formal smoke offering required when his aid was asked in other matters, gave him a gift and asked that the young man be excused. If the medicine man accepted the gift, the young man was told to go behind the screen, take up his bed and leave. His father went with him from the lodge to the creek, where the young man washed his mouth out, dived in four times against the current and then washed his mouth again. After this he was free to go home. Diving four times against the current was also a part of the ritual used in relinquishing any supernatural power which had become burdensome. Sometimes another man would take the place of the one who had been released and finish the dance for him, but informants did not know how this was arranged. Actually, such releases were very infre-
[558] quent, as they were considered disgraceful.

796 The dance ended at midnight on the fourth day. Informants were not
535 sure whether the dancers underwent any ceremony of secularization at the end of the ceremony. The next morning camp was broken and the various bands moved back to their own ranges. Four over night halts had to be made on the return trip. Even the band in whose territory the dance had been held would move away, leaving the lodge with its offerings deserted. Shortly after the dance a series of small feasts would be given, one in honor of each dancer. To these feasts only the dancer, his relatives, the medicine man, and the old men of the Sun Dance orchestra would be invited.

Very little regarding the symbolism or purpose of the dance is remem-
[346] bered at the present time. The whole lodge is said to have represented an eagle's nest while the buffalo manikin or pelt placed on top of the center pole is said to have been food for the eagle. In their movements and whistling the dancers were supposed to be imitating young eagles not yet able to fly.

31: Jones E-S (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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she desired simply by wishing for it. Sanapia evades the strictures of this taboo by circumlocutions when her daily routine dictates that she must ask an individual for some object or assistance.

The second "rule" which she acquired at this stage required that she must always be alone when she doctors. Once again, Sanapia views this as a recognition of the potential dangers which excessive supernatural powers possess for humans. The only individuals who could possibly be with her while she doctors are other eagle doctors or persons who Sanapia feels have Medicine which would protect them against the dangers of supernatural contamination.

Kardiner (1945:64) makes a comment relevant at this point when writing on the subject of Comanche notions of power and magic.

> Another interesting point in connection with power, probably unique with the Comanches, is that power might be obtained from the ghosts of medicine men. This was obtained through sleeping by the grave of the medicine man, not moving all night, no matter what terrifying thing happened. The ghost would then transfer the power asked for. Sometimes the sleeper would have a vision; in this the ghost did not come in human form but as a great wind and then a giant bird, which conveyed to him the power that he wanted.

Sanapia's discussion of the later stages of her training agrees with Kardiner's statement in general; however, some major divergences appear. Sanapia, through her Medicine song, is able to summon the spirits of her mother and uncle to her aid. She does not consider their appearance as the apparition of ghosts, however. To Sanapia, ghosts are totally evil entities. Ghosts are also unable to appear in human form since, in her opinion, their human forms decomposed at the place of their interment. Her mother and uncle appear to her looking exactly as they did during the time of her training. When they appear, they do not speak but rather employ hand signs to tell Sanapia that they have come to her aid.

She does not mention a Medicine man's grave as the location of the inevitable struggle with the ghosts, and she definitely does not feel that power is transmitted to her from ghosts. She does agree generally with Kardiner's mention of a "giant bird" as one of her power sources, though she does not believe that the Medicine bird is actually a ghost in another form.

In reiteration, Sanapia states that she received her initial powers through her mother and maternal uncle, and only later in her life was she honored with visitations by the eagle, her patron and guardian spirit. The four days and nights of seclusion and meditation, in her opinion, are in actuality a final test of a new doctor's ability to withstand the attacks of ghosts, and not a time when he is in a position to acquire further powers from a supernatural patron.

Final Test

Sanapia failed her final test. After her mother had explained to her what she could expect during her four-day ordeal, Sanapia was too frightened to go through with the vigil. She would spend the daylight hours sitting on the hill

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to which her mother had sent her, and at dusk she would creep back to her house and pass the night under the front porch. In the morning she would go back to the hill before the household had awakened. Her mother and uncle never knew about this deception. However, Sanapia believes that the great amount of sickness and misfortune experienced as a young woman can be attributed to her cowardly conduct during this last phase of her training.

> Before, you have to go and fast four days, before they give you that Medicine. Maybe take a little water. You suppose to go up there on that hill and sleep up there by yourself. You suppose to pray and cry and talk. My mother say, "Somebody will come to you way in the night . . . in the middle of the night. They going to push you and kick you and they do things like that, but don't get scared. They going to kick you around and slap you. They fighting you for your Medicine." That's what they told me. But me, I was afraid to sleep up there in them mountains by myself. I didn't want to go out. I go up there and come back. Nobody come to me . . . or nothing.

Before appearing at her home on the morning of the fifth day, Sanapia bathed in a running stream as a device to erase any vestiges of supernatural residue which could be harmful to those who would greet her on her return. The mother met Sanapia as she approached the house and blessed her with the standard cedaring, fanning, and application of red paint. It was also during this blessing that the mother first addressed her daughter as *puhakut*.

Close friends of Sanapia's family had gathered at the house to congratulate Sanapia and to present her with gifts. The host family in turn gave gifts to those who came to honor Sanapia. Moccasins, blankets, shawls, groceries, money, dishes, yard goods, and horses were the items which were exchanged as gifts.

Within a few days after Sanapia returned from her four-day fasting, her family sponsored a peyote meeting. The main function of this particular meeting was to gather a large group of Comanches for the purpose of formally announcing Sanapia's newly acquired status. Also, it was thought that the prayers which would be offered for her during the meeting would aid her to more easily bear the burdens which her power imposed. The morning after the meeting was festive, consisting of more gift giving and feasting. However, at the same time that the beginning of Sanapia's new career was being celebrated, her mother's doctoring career had ended. The mother, though retaining all her powers, would cease to function as a doctor. Her withdrawal, however, was voluntary. If she had so desired, she could have continued her doctoring activities. This type of behavior would have been considered improper on the part of the mother, even though Sanapia would not be able to doctor until many years in the future, after menopause. Sanapia, basing her actions on those of her mother, will also cease doctoring once she has transmitted her skills and powers to her successor. In the nomadic Comanche culture, power could be transmitted from donor to recipient with no loss on the part of the donor. This is the case with the transmission of power from the mother to Sanapia.

In Sanapia's accounts of her mother's temper during the time of transmission of power, it would seem that the mother, who had reached a very advanced

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become jealous of the children of other women and to punish the younger women attempt to kill their children. 754 756 [828]

Sanapia feels that the incidents of witchcraft are very rare and are occurring less frequently as the older people of the tribe pass away. In her career as a doctor, a period spanning approximately thirty years, Sanapia reports only six cases of which she has had personal knowledge, though she points out that when she was younger, there were more doctors who could be approached for aid by a witchcraft victim.

The last case of this kind which Sanapia treated occurred two months after I had established rapport with her. It was the first case of witchcraft which she had doctored in four years. This was fortunate for the purposes of my investigation, for Sanapia's full attention was on the subject, and I was also able to obtain an account of the manner in which she doctored her niece's child, the victim of the witch. Before proceeding with a description of the doctoring of a witched individual, I would like to discuss a method of witchcraft known by Sanapia.

A Method of Witchcraft

When a *puhakut* has decided to witch someone, he first spends four days fasting and praying that what he is about to wish will come to pass. These four days are not as rigorously observed as the four days of "vision quest." Fasting is not total, and though he should be outside during the day where he has privacy, he is free to return to his home at night. When he goes to pray, the *puhakut* is only allowed to take water and Bull Durham tobacco and corn shucks for rolling cigarettes. He must also be at his chosen place of prayer before sunrise to make his morning prayers to the sun. This is the first of many elements in this method of witchcraft which strongly suggests that it was or is the method of the eagle doctors. Sanapia, of course, denies this. 754 756 785 [782]

After the period of preparation, the *puhakut* laces a short length of buckskin through his flesh and ties it in a knot, thus forming a loose loop about an inch in diameter which is attached to the flesh. This piece of buckskin can be placed anywhere on the body, though Sanapia states that it is usually visible. She is not unaware of the psychological affect such a display can have.

> Maybe someone sees him like that . . . with that buckskin, they might get scared and stop doing what's making him mad. That's what I think. I ask some old man that had that when I was little what he was doing and he didn't say nothing to me. My grandmother get after me for talking to him and she told me about that part. Later I heard of it around here.

The time between the first stage of the act of witchcraft and the execution of the final stages is indeterminate in length. Perhaps, as Sanapia suggests, if the display of the buckskin loop frightens the potential victim enough, the actions which are aggravating the *puhakut* may cease, and the final stage of the witching need not occur. During this time the wearer of the buckskin loop tells no one

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754 who his potential victim might be, and it is considered a breach of etiquette to
756 quiz him on the subject. There is also the element of fear present since the
785 *puhakut*, though prepared to witch, does not name his victim until the final stage of witchcraft, and thus any untoward actions by an individual may draw the *puhakut*'s pent-up resolve in a direction which could be decided by him on the spur of the moment. Sanapia likens the *puhakut*, during this phase of witchcraft, to a bomb which could be detonated at the slightest touch.

751 The final stage of witchcraft is initiated by sunrise on the selected day
756 and is completed by sunset on the same day. The *puhakut* takes a white eagle
237 plume and, puncturing the base of the rib, inserts a length of buckskin approximately 12 inches long. The buckskin is tied so that the plume dangles tip down from this buckskin strand. Immediately before sunrise, carrying this one specially prepared item, the *puhakut* goes off by himself to perform his witchcraft. He secures the plume from the branch of a tree in such a manner that it will be hidden from the view of a possible passerby but so it can move freely at the dictates of the wind. He then sits beneath the plume and begins to pray for the death of his victim. As he prays, he makes before him in the soil a small replica of a grave and prays that when the plume finally breaks free from its tether, the object of his prayers will die and enter the grave which has been prepared for him. At sunset the *puhakut* returns to his home, his witchcraft completed. He wears the buckskin loop until the death of his victim, at which time he cuts it from his skin, burns it, and throws the ashes into the nearest running water.

Kardiner (1945:67) writes that a Comanche who thought he was going to be witched or who had been witched could pay the doctor who was responsible to remove the "spell." Sanapia denies this and emphasizes that one of the particularly horrible things about witchcraft is that it cannot be stopped once it is set in motion. A doctor can sometimes cure the witch's victim once the witchcraft has been actualized, but nothing can be done by a doctor before the symptoms appear in the victim. She feels that the majority of witching situations never reach the final stage. In her opinion the buckskin loop advertisement of the witch usually persuades the potential victim to cease his misbehavior before the witch finally and irrevocably sets his black magic into operation. Sanapia also states that this is used as a form of blackmail by some Comanches.

Sanapia refers to this final stage of witchcraft as "shooting the feather." She states that the witch causes the eagle plume to enter the body of the victim at the moment it breaks free from its tether. The feather enters the victim immediately below the surface of the skin and proceeds to move rapidly over the entire body area, causing the physical symptoms associated with witchcraft. It finally lodges in some area of the victim's body, where it will eventually cause his death if it is not removed by a doctor who possesses the Medicine required to counteract its influence.

754 It is significant that the method of witchcraft as related by an eagle doctor
756 would have as its principle ritual an eagle plume which is prepared and utilized
825 in such a manner as to make it as much like an eagle as possible: It is placed very high in a tree, and it is attached to the tree in such a manner that it will be able to move freely and naturally at the motion of the wind. This follows from